



SPECIAL EDITION

**FY 2009 SENATE BUDGET CONTAINS
EFFICIENCIES FOR CORRECTIONS**

As your Director, I am apologizing for the way in which our initial message of possible job cuts was delivered to those employees who may be affected by efficiencies under consideration in the FY 2009 budget. As I have said before, it is our intent to be transparent in sharing all factual and relevant budget information as the process unfolds. In this case, information was not appropriately communicated to our employees. Understandably, our lack of appropriate communication has caused confusion and stress among many employees. Each employee is an important part of achieving our mission and decisions that create possible layoffs are very difficult.

In the past few years, every aspect of our operation has been scrutinized to ensure that we are being as efficient as possible while maintaining public safety. The Field Operations Administration recently went through a reorganization that consolidated some operations and enhanced cost savings while delivering the same level of service. Our human resources component has also seen a significant downsizing and reorganization as a result of technological innovations and centralization of services. We will continue to look at all areas of our Department to find efficiencies that have the least impact on facility security and operational needs while maximizing economic benefit.

The Department of Corrections is working with the Council of State Governments under their Justice Reinvestment Initiative to work collaboratively with the Legislature to generate savings and budget reductions through operational efficiencies and reforms. The refinement of our current business model through the use of new and improving technologies that allow for greater regionalization and centralization will result in greater efficiency and overall savings within the FY 2009 budget.



The Executive Budget recommendation, supported in the Senate Budget bill proposes:

- Regionalization of accounting functions across the Department to three regional locations (anticipated at this time to be at or near the regional offices). This regionalization would potentially impact all accounting and procurement staff.
- Centralization of prisoner stores and consolidation of warehouse operations. This action would impact storekeepers, equipment operators, and some storekeeper supervisors. This proposal may also result in a centralized Prisoner Benefit Fund with committees at the facility level.
- The regionalization of certain plumbers and electricians who pull permits for the entire region.

If this budget is passed into law as proposed, the Department will work diligently to place as many affected staff as possible in vacancies within the Department. The Bureau of Human Resources and Correctional Facilities Administration will work with all impacted staff to determine their qualifications for other classifications. Where possible, this may include seeking special waivers in order to permit staff to become corrections officers and allow extended time for impacted staff to earn college credits required to qualify for other classifications.

The Department would also work with other departments and agencies in order to minimize the impact on staff. If you are concerned that this budget proposal may have an impact on your position with the Department, please consult with your supervisor and human resource representative about your current options, including updating your employee preference form.

Remember that all of these recommendations are a only one step toward a FY 2009 Corrections Budget. There are still many steps in the process and considerable negotiations will occur prior to this budget bill becoming law.

I know personally how difficult these changes are, having gone through a similar type of consolidation in the early in my career. Please remember that **F.Y.I.** remains the official Department conduit for information on the budget. It is another difficult year and I remain cognizant of your anxiety during these uncertain times. I am asking employees not to engage in the rumor mill and respect each other by discussing only what we know rather than speculating on inaccurate information.

Respectfully,

Patricia L. Caruso